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## **Statement by Senator Tom Harkin**

Markup of the FY 2010 Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education, and  
Related Agencies Bill

July 28, 2009  
As Prepared for Delivery

“Today this subcommittee is convened to mark up the fiscal year 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

“This is an unusual year, to say the least. We’re considering this bill less than six months since Congress passed the Recovery Act, which provided more than \$124 billion for programs that are under this subcommittee’s jurisdiction, including almost \$100 billion for the Department of Education and more than \$10 billion for the National Institutes of Health.

“That act was a major factor in shaping this bill. Some people might look at funding levels in this bill and wonder why there isn’t more money for some of our traditional priorities, such as Title I, Pell Grants, special education, and the National Institutes of Health. Those are usually the programs that get the biggest increases in our bill.

“But those programs received enormous increases in the Recovery Act, and most of that funding will be obligated during the same period covered by this appropriations bill, fiscal year 2010.

“So instead of providing even more increases to programs that did very well in the Recovery Act, this bill instead emphasizes several other important programs.

“Chief among them is school renovation, which Congress has not funded on a national scale since fiscal year 2001. School renovation should have been funded in the Recovery Act. It creates jobs, it makes schools healthier, it improves energy efficiency, and, most important, when students are in schools that are safe, they do better academically.

“Up until the last moment of negotiations for the Recovery Act, both the House and Senate planned to include at least \$15 billion for school renovation. But, in the end, school renovation ended up with no designated funding at all.

“That was a serious mistake that we will partially correct in this bill. We have included \$700 million for school renovation. The program is modeled after one that I started in Iowa that has been hugely successful. Districts compete for Federal funding and then match the money with local funding. Since 1998, Iowa districts have received \$121 million in Federal assistance, and they’ve leveraged those grants for more than \$600 million in additional funding. One dollar in Federal funding becomes six dollars that can improve a neighborhood school – and, I might add, stimulate the economy.

“Another highlight of this bill is worker protections. Agencies that enforce rules protecting the health, safety, and rights of workers have been seriously shortchanged. This bill adds \$118 million over the level in the fiscal year 2009 appropriations bill, and brings staffing levels at OSHA, MSHA and the Employment Standards Administration just back to the level where they were in 2001.

“The bill also provides a major increase for national and community service programs – \$267 million more than the level in the fiscal year 2009 omnibus bill. That’s enough to boost the number of AmeriCorps members and create a new Social Innovation Fund that will help small nonprofits to tackle a host of social problems.

“Other priorities in this bill include education reforms, such as charter schools and performance-based pay, and a variety of programs to target fraud, waste and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

“I want to thank Senator Cochran and his staff for their help in writing this bill. As is traditional in this subcommittee, this is a bipartisan bill, and we did our best to accommodate the concerns of the Vice Chairman and other members of the subcommittee.

“It’s never easy writing this bill. We had to make a lot of tough choices, and not everyone will be happy with every one of them. But we did the very best we could. And, I believe, we have produced an excellent bill of which this subcommittee can be proud.

“I yield, now, to Senator Cochran for any comments he’d like to make.”

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